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# American Art Journal.

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## OPEN AIR MUSIC.

If there is one thing more delightful than another, it is listening to music in the open air. No matter if the music is better there than elsewhere, the charm does not altogether rest with its superiority, but rather with the surroundings. The open air is a great concert hall, the foundation stone of which was laid by the Great Architect, without the aid of a municipal officer, for no private aggrandizement, but for general use, and its acoustic powers are unquestionable, for they carry, and blend and harmonize the tones in one rounded sweetness, and soften any acerbity that a smaller place might betray. Then the glory of breathing the fresh air, of inhaling the perfumes of the flowers, of drinking in with loving eyes the human beauty which surrounds us, and with eager ears absorbing the sensuous luxury of music, air-modulated and refined to a tender pathos, which laps the senses in a calm sublime, and moves the heart with sentiments of passionate sympathy. Music is enjoyed with double-edged keenness under such circumstances.

We are not naturally an out-of-doors gregarious people, saving and excepting when we throng some fashionable watering place, and vie in honorable rivalry in the race of folly, fashion and dissipation. In the reasonable love for out-door enjoyment we might with advantage take a leaf out of the daily lives of the French and German people. They thoroughly comprehend the full scope of intellectual-physical enjoyment—the entire satisfying of the simple senses in a harmless and intelligent manner. They have their Gardens and Garden Music, some arranged in a style of refined luxury, where the best of the land meet and

enjoy a *dolce far niente*, of the most luxurious character, while others, the majority, are fixed up in the purely pastoral style. But in all, whatever their variety, the people thoroughly, heartily and wholly enjoy those hours of exquisite leisure and unqualified pleasure. It is to make us a healthier and happier people that we advocate more liberal out-door habits. We wish to see our American people adopt the foreign notion, and incorporate it into our manners, so that it will not seem to be exotic, but rather, as though it was indigenous to the soil.

The enterprise which Mr. Theodore Thomas has commenced at Terrace Garden, 58th and 59th streets, Third avenue, affords a fair opportunity for a trial. The Gardens are most pleasantly situated, the arrangements are good, the attendance excellent, the refreshments, and the choice comprises almost everything that could be demanded from a very admirable *cuisine*, and the music, executed by an orchestra composed of many of our best musicians, under the able leadership of Theodore Thomas, varied and delightful. Here we have all the special charms which make the public gardens of Europe so universally attractive. We wish to see our people visit this place, to become habituated to the manners, and if they will accept the opportunity offered, we are satisfied that they will thoroughly enjoy it, and will incorporate it into the amusements of their daily life, with that facility of adaptation which is a marked characteristic of our people.

Mr. Thomas's experiment has been tried but two or three nights, but the results are sufficiently satisfactory to augur a season of brilliant success. Terrace Garden has been thronged by an elegant and attentive audience. Ladies, gentlemen, whole families, parents and children, have graced the grounds, and more happy and appreciative audiences we have never seen gathered together at any place of public amusement. The music is listened to with profound and appreciative attention, and the pleasant and joyous gossip afterwards, proves how completely the spirit of enjoyment prevails.

Mr. Thomas has given us a new pleasure, and he will certainly meet with a liberal reward, and the proprietors, the Brothers Koch, will find their politeness, and the admirable measures they have taken to accommodate the public, and to gratify the taste every way, an El Dorado which many seasons will not exhaust.

## ACADEMIES OF ART.

It will be perceived that the management of the Academies of Art is the same all over the world. The faults rests not so much with the systems, as with the frailty of human nature. Dispassionate and unprejudiced judgment is a quality of the mind but rarely found, and still more rarely exercised. Mediocrity,

too, is loud in its clamors for notoriety, and unsatisfied ambition makes glib talkers against the barriers which institutions set up in opposition to its advancement. The wrong is by no means all on the side of the Academies. Special cases of injustice, arising from jealousy, may be adduced, but until the world becomes more virtuous, those in power will use it to their own advantage, and custom will recognize their right. For those who complain the loudest when "out," are, when "in," generally the most tenacious of their own interests.

"Gamma," the Paris correspondent of the *N. O. Picayune*, thus comments upon the encouragement of Art in Paris:

There is no woman, whatever cause she may have to complain of nature, who has not heard, at least once in her life, love's soft whisper. The variety of tastes is infinite; consequently not only every visage has its admirer, but there is scarcely a defective feature of homely beauty's countenance but is looked upon with admiration by some eye. This infinite variety of tastes is likewise the warrant for artist's hopes. Every daub with which inexperience or awkwardness has cheapened canvass, is a picture to some eye. We have but to look at the walls of our friends' houses and to listen to their praise, and tell the price of their purchases, to be convinced of the truth of this remark. This is the reason artists take so deeply to heart exclusion from the annual Exhibition of Fine Arts. It is denial of publicity. It is veiling their work from all eyes. All artists hope to receive some of the great rewards given by Government to art. An honorable mention, or a first, second or third class medal, or the decoration or some promotion in the Legion of Honor, or some order from Government, dance before them in castles-in-the-air. These hopes are destined to be disappointed in a great many instances. There are 80 or 100 of these great rewards (true, it is said, the Government will give orders with an unusually liberal hand this year,) and 3000 artists; but there remains the great public, who buy all the pictures. These sales enable the artists to live and to advance in their profession; they increase the demand for their pictures, and introduce the artists by degrees to a considerable circle of purchasers. The poorest artist finds a buyer for his worst daub, and is enabled to perform the alchemy of transmuting the sweat of brain and brow into silver, if not into gold, whereby life is secured. This year the jury have acted with great harshness. They have excluded many of the most robust artists, painters who have grappled fairly with nature, and wrestled earnestly with her. I do not pretend to say the skill has not often betrayed the will. On the contrary, from my recollection of the rejected rooms of the last three years, I am sure there must have been a great many miscarriages. - But these earnest struggles, these prattlings of art, which will soon become eloquence, should be encouraged: and the only encouragement they can receive is publicity. The members of the jury have no standard by which they judge of the works

laid before them. If they are in a good humor, all the pictures presented are accepted; if they are in a bad humor none are accepted. One painter has proclaimed to the world he sent, three years ago, two pictures to the exhibition; all his pictures have been admitted for the last fifteen years. These two pictures were refused. He effaced his name and sent them to the exhibition last year, under a pseudonym; both were admitted, and one received a medal! He sent, this year, under his own name, the picture which received a medal last year, and it was rejected! The Government has refused to open rejected rooms this year. The artists are attempting to make it reconsider its determination, and grant at least this churlish hospitality.

#### NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN.

##### WEST ROOM.

No. 426. "Genesee Flats," by Mr. J. W. Casilear. This picture is very noticeable for the clever handling of the foliage, in which Mr. Casilear excels. It is also excellent in feeling.

No. 443. "Near Great Barrington, Mass.," by Mr. A. D. Shattuck. There is some very sweet color in this picture; the trees on the left are particularly good. The effect of shadow among them is pleasant, but the foreground is weak.

No. 448. "Tortoise," by Mr. R. J. Pattison. Mr. Pattison sends several pictures to the Academy this year, which are, perhaps, unfortunate efforts, and the less said about them the better.

No. 449. "The Flight of the Birds," by Mr. J. E. McEntee, is fine in color, although in a very different key from that which Mr. McEntee usually affects. An ornithologist might possibly object to the birds he has introduced, on more grounds than one.

No. 463. "A Summer Picture," by Mr. C. C. Griswold. A very careful and accurate study from nature, excellent in every point, and highly creditable to Mr. Griswold's skill.

No. 486. "Three Peaches," by Mr. W. T. Matthews. A very faithful study, and good in color.

No. 487. "Cordova, Spain," by Mr. S. Coleman. Mr. Coleman has become one of our best colorists, and this picture excels in that quality. No. 494, by the same artist, is noticeable for the same excellence.

No. 490. "Prisoners from the Front," by Mr. Winslow Homer. Mr. Homer's color is still immature. The figures in this picture are good in drawing and excellent in the rendering of expression. In the indication of character, Mr. Homer promises to stand very high among American artists.

No. 491. "In the Catskills—Portraits," by Mr. Geo. H. Hall. This picture is remarkable—containing one of the best portraits of an artist painted by himself that we have ever seen. It also has less of that obscurity of color which Mr. Hall has lately introduced in his pictures.

No. 504. "Saranac River," by Mr. Homer Martin. A very charming picture, in subject, handling and color.

There are a few pictures in the several rooms which we noted, but failed to include according to rotation of numbers. We notice them now, without reference to position.

No. 224. "The Bouquet Range of the Adirondacks," A. Lawrie. The leaves in the foreground

are like cakes of foliage—undergrowth on the rocks coarse and indefinite. The general effect is telling, but the color is raw.

No. 438. "St. Erasme Gaeta," Mr. Edward L. Henry. This is good in all points. The architecture is sharp and well-defined—groupings of character full of spirit and indicative of every-day life. The atmosphere is intensely southern, and the manifold details, which are very minute, are broadly touched in, with not too high a finish.

No. 424. "Roman Compagna," by Mr. W. W. Witherspoon. Well drawn, effectively colored, and fine in feeling.

No. 511. "Flowers," Miss S. W. Wenzler. A good study; colors strongly but, perhaps, hardly sufficiently blended. Form and texture well preserved.

No. 504. "Saranac River," by Mr. H. D. Martin. Misty effect, good and truthful. The shadows and reflections are clear, and the foliage details and character are excellent.

No. 480. This fruit is fine in color and texture; ripe, luscious, and ready for eating.

No. 223. "Sunset," by Mr. S. P. Hodgdon. Landscape well drawn and composed. The sky is gorgeous in color, but the general color overhead is too darkly tinted for that hour. The road on the right, in half light, is an effective point.

No. 376. "Glimpse of Mount Blanc," by Mr. Regis Gignoux. As we remarked in the commencement of these articles, Mr. Gignoux's picture is unquestionably the finest landscape in the exhibition. The subject chosen is grand in itself, and is grandly treated. The glimpse of Mount Blanc is had through a vast and deep gorge in the lower mountains, and the effects aimed at and obtained are those of vast height without great distance and utter solitude. The contrasted misty depths, with the sun-tipped mountain snow peaks, convey the artist's thought vividly to the spectators' eye, and that occult feeling which only the touch of a great artist can convey, gives even to that utter solitude a sentiment which connects it with humanity—with our sentient being. That sentiment which promoted the desire of the poet—

"To mingle with the universe and feel  
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal."

The forms of the bold rocky outlines are boldly drawn, and even in the smaller details the marked character of the scene is perfectly preserved. In color it is fine, and the eye does not tire with gazing on this admirable transcription of nature.

No. 357. "Charcoal Wagon in the Alleghanies," by Mr. Peter Moran. The wagon overtaken by a sudden storm, just on the point of a descending road. The action of the wagoner and the horses is excellent. The whole group is boldly sketched in, and is well drawn.

No. 260. "Study of a Quail," by Mr. J. H. Cafferty. An excellent study, and handled freely and effectively.

No. 207. By the same artist, is equally faithful and excellent.

No. 306. "Moonlight," by Mr. Hermann Fuehsal, is a pleasant landscape, with a good diffuse moonlight effect.

No. 222. "Little Ones in Trouble," by Mr. D. C. Fabronnius. A winter scene, with a group of children in trouble about their sleds. The subject is effectively treated, the expression of the faces good, and the details well painted.

##### THE SCULPTURE ROOM.

The sculpture room is very meagre in subjects,

but some few are well worthy of notice. A group of horses, by Mr. W. M. Hunt, wonderfully spirited, although the drawing is not always correct. "The Falling Gladiator," by Mr. W. Rimmer, is remarkable for the boldness of its conception, and for its very careful anatomy. Mr. John Rogers has a most excellent characteristic group of intelligent contrabands, called "Uncle Ned's School." The grouping is good, the expression admirable; the drapery and, indeed, all the details are carefully and artistically designed and executed. It is one of Mr. Roger's most characteristic groups. There are some very excellent busts, and two or three allegorical figures, which are worthy of much praise. Mr. Salathiel Ellis has several capital medallion portraits, which are faithful and well modeled. The Vanderbilt medal, presented by the Government of the United States to Commodore Vanderbilt, in acknowledgment for his princely liberality to his country during the war, and executed by Mr. Ellis, is also exhibited. It is a creditable work of art.

It is impossible, in a necessarily brief notice, to mention any great number of the pictures in the Academy Exhibition. Among those we have passed over, there are many which no man need be ashamed to buy and hang on his library walls, and there are very few that are entirely bad; in fact, the number of painters who show no talent whatever is very small, and does not constitute above 30 per cent. of the artists here represented. The exhibition, upon the whole, is neither better nor worse than those of the last three or four years; but when we remember the really great pictures that used to draw us to the Academy galleries eight or ten years ago, it becomes evident that this is not what an exhibition of the Academy of Design should be. The pictures, almost as a whole, fail in the matter of color; but this is to be expected so long as the American public, which seems to be color blind, will insist upon wagging its foolish head in an ecstasy of admiration over every foolish paradise of a landscape and leather-colored portrait that the Academy deems fit to hang in prominent places.

There seems also to be a great lack of earnestness on the part of our painters. In place of patient, honest and laborious study of nature, they depend for success, in very many instances, upon mere tricks and eccentricities. They are not trying to paint good pictures, but odd pictures; not to please the public, but to astonish it. And this is the more unfortunate, as many of these very pictures would have been really good if they had not been ruined by affectation. The general critics are very much to blame for this, because, instead of saying honestly and directly what is good or bad in a picture, they excuse the bad qualities with timid circumlocution, and obscure the good with transcendental vagueness, thus mystifying the public and misleading the painter. The elements of a picture are very simple and very few. If we say composition, drawing, light, and shade, and color, we exhaust the list. Every competent critic knows whether a picture is good or otherwise in either of these respects, and if he would frankly state the fact, it might result in doing much good. It is time that this course was adopted in art criticism.